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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 005089

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SUNNI ARABS EXPAND SECURITY DIALOGUE WITH AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL CASEY

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Sunni Arab leaders from the Iraqi Tawafuq (Consensus) Front met with the Ambassador and General Casey to continue a dialogue on security issues and outreach on December 21. The group, led by Iraqi Islamic Party leader Tariq al-Hashemi and National Dialogue Council leader Khalaf al-Ayan, was still preoccupied with election results and fraud allegations. They ultimately touched on several key issues including ways to combat Iranian influence in Iraq, the need to expand detainee abuse investigations, the need for a committee to review all MNF-I and Iraqi government detainees, and ways to expand the calm that accompanied the elections. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) The delegation of Sunni Arabs from the Iraqi Tawafuq (Consensus) Front discussed the following key issues in a December 20 meeting with the Ambassador and General Casey.

-- IRANIAN INFLUENCE: The group alleged that trucks from Iran had been found entering Iraq with fake ballots. General Casey said these reports were found to be false on the basis of U.S. intelligence and an Interior Ministry investigation. National Dialogue Council member Abd al-Nasser al-Janabi argued that the U.S. should fund the Mujahideen al-Khalq (MEK) and use it to defend the Iran-Iraq border.

-- DETAINEE ABUSES: The group asked for a copy of the results of the Iraqi government's Jadriyya prison investigation and called for further raids. Hashemi passed Poloff further details on allegedly secret Ministry of Interior detention facilities. We have passed these on to MNF-I personnel conducting joint MNF-I and Iraqi Government inspections.

-- DETAINEE RELEASES: The group passed multiple lists of detainees for review and asked to form a joint committee to review the status of all MNF-I and Iraqi government security detainees. National Dialogue Council member Mahmud Mashhadani specifically appealed for the release of one prominent Salafist and one prominent Ba'athist, both of whom he said were prepared to work to restore calm in their radicalized currents if given a chance.

-- MAINTAINING CALM: The group agreed on the need to remain calm, but al-Ayan warned that the street might spiral out of control if the Sunni Arab community begins to perceive the elections as a fraud or see their community marginalized. General Casey agreed on the need to address these concerns but warned against using violence to achieve Sunni Arab goals. Ayan said he intended no threat, but Hashemi confided that he heard reports that violence would escalate over the next two days.

KHALILZAD